

# Officials check out home upgrades



Rocco Soda, director of real estate for Arbor Housing & Development, talks with area politicians during a visit to the houses being worked on by Arbor on the northside of Corning. [ERIC WENSEL/THE LEADER]

## Formerly blighted Northside properties nearly ready for sale

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CORNING - Local officials toured two previously blighted Northside properties Wednesday afternoon that

are currently being upgraded to liveable homes to improve neighborhoods.

Upgrades are ongoing at 232 Onondaga Street and 161 Kingsbury Avenue, said Rocco Soda, director of real estate for Arbor Housing. The neglected properties were purchased in September by the Steuben County Land Bank Corporation.

The Land Bank, created in July 2016, provides the county another tool to redevelop vacant, run-down properties.

"It's great to see the amount of investment happening in these neighborhoods," said City Manager Mark Ryckman. "We're very thankful to Steuben County for making this type of investment."

Steuben County Manager Jack Wheeler called the work being done on the two Northside homes fantastic.

"The work that has been done is just incredible," Wheeler said. "A lot of progress has been made and this work will really improve the neighborhood."

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Soda said the work to upgrade the 1,152-square-foot Kingsbury Avenue home will be completed in late April, while work on the larger Onondaga Street home will likely be completed in mid-May.

"Both (homes) will immediately be up for sale when the work is completed," Soda said.

Jeffrey Eaton, president and CEO of Arbor Housing and Development, said Steuben County, the City of Corning and Arbor Housing have each chipped

in and helped make the ongoing upgrades to the two blighted properties a reality.

"I think it's been a good process," Eaton said. "We're taking two blighted houses and we are going to turn them into home ownership and improve neighborhoods. That's really what we're all about. I think it's going great."

Ryckman said it takes a strong partnership with the private sector and other government agencies to have a significant impact like this.

"This was once a beautiful house," Ryckman said of the Onondaga Street home. "It's too bad it fell into disrepair - but soon, Steuben County and Arbor

Housing will help us bring it back and bring the neighborhood back."

Mayor Bill Boland agreed.

"It's remarkable," Boland said. "My understanding is this house was all but trashed and to see it resurrected is wonderful. It's going to be a spectacular home for somebody."

Boland also called the upgrades to the Kingsbury Avenue home remarkable.

"Kingsbury is a small house," Ryckman said. "It's a nice house - I think it would be a good starter home for a young family. It's a nice neighborhood, and again we thank Steuben County for helping us bring these houses back."



Steuben County Manager Jack Wheeler, Rocco Soda, director of real estate for Arbor Housing, Corning Mayor Bill Boland and Steuben County Legislator Scott Van Elten talk about one of the houses Arbor Development is working on on the northside of Corning. [ERIC WENSEL/THE LEADER]